

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	321264
Inspection date	05 December 2007
Inspector	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Childminding

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The childminder was registered in 1996. She lives with her family in a detached house in a rural village on the eastern outskirts of York. The whole of the ground floor and the bathroom on the first floor are used for childminding. There is a secure back garden used for outside play.

The childminder is registered to care for six children. She is also registered with the local education authority to provide funded nursery education to those children of eligible age. Of the seven children aged under eight years currently on roll, four are in receipt of such funding. Older children are also cared for. The childminder has completed the Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education, which is a level 4 qualification, and is a member of the York accredited childminding network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where they learn about sensible procedures for maintaining their health, such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. The childminder does not provide meals but she works with parents and the children so that they learn to make healthy choices in their diet; she has additional healthy snacks handy should they be needed and offers drinks regularly. Mealtimes are a pleasant social occasion. Well nourished and hydrated, younger children sleep well and wake refreshed and older children play happily together.

Children develop a positive approach to being active in the outdoors, particularly in better weather. There is a broad range of interesting activities for children of all ages in the large enclosed garden. They have great fun going down the slide into the small pool and they develop their sense of balance as they ride down the slope on their tricycles. In winter children's health benefits from regular walks, for example, out to collect leaves for their collage, and they enjoy splashing their boots in the puddles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children can play freely in the homely environment because the childminder has a secure understanding of how to identify possible risks to the children and minimise them effectively. Children learn to keep themselves safe because they leave the house quickly and calmly as they practise the emergency evacuation procedures. Younger children learn the necessary skills to keep themselves safe as they climb on the childminder's sofa and cushions.

Children enjoy the range of toys and equipment which is good safe condition and they use the childminder's domestic furniture freely for their rest and play. The addition of child-sized furniture in the kitchen means that children sit comfortably for their meals and for their creative activities. Children are well protected and their well-being safeguarded because the childminder keeps local and national guidance on file should she need advice and keeps her related knowledge and skills up to date. The clear policy in place confirms the childminder's commitment to protecting the children in her care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very relaxed and happy in the childminder's care. They snuggle happily onto her lap for a story and confidently tell her when they would like additional equipment out of the garage for their game. Accessible storage is quite limited, but the childminder makes sure that there is good choice and variety for the children by rotating the equipment regularly and happily fetching resources that they have asked for. Children are interested in the range of resources presented for them at ground level; they rummage confidently for their favourite toys and books from the boxes.

The childminder presents various opportunities for children to develop their creative skills. Children express themselves freely in their painting and collage work. They are also very confident in using musical instruments freely to illustrate a favourite story. For example, they join in spontaneously with musical instruments as the childminder tells the 'Bear Hunt' story or sings 'The Wheels on the Bus'. Children use a high level of imagination as they play with the small world or role play items. Younger children following the older ones' lead, similarly beginning to express their thoughts and ideas confidently. Children develop excellent language skills because the childminder is proactive in engaging them in conversation and encouraging their conversations with each other. They develop a keen interest in books; they enjoy the pictures and stories and also the comfortable closeness they experience in sharing a book. The childminder also uses her range of books well to encourage the children to talk about real issues. Children are very surprised when the princess in the book does not know to say 'please' when she wants her dinner.

Children learn practical mathematical skills from an early age. The youngest children begin to recognise shape, size and form, they compare their brick towers with the older children's work and they help to set the table for lunch. Older children use increasingly complex mathematical language, graduating from using words such as 'big' and 'little' to talk about what they have made, to describing the towers as 'long', 'longer' or 'longest'. Children also enjoy the various games, which encourages their interest in number. They sometimes make their own games up to play on the large snakes and ladders board. Children begin to develop their natural curiosity as learners. In better weather they experiment with sand and water play in the garden. In winter this is sometimes available indoors along with play dough or baking activities. Children talk about the weather knowledgeably together as they complete the daily calendar with the minimum of adult support.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The childminder's activity plans show a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and also that all areas of learning are covered effectively. She evaluates the activities and uses observations of the children well to establish their level of development and to plan the next steps for their learning. A more formalised assessment is made as children move on to school; this includes effective liaison with other pre-school provisions where children also attend. Although the childminder provides a broad range of activities which help the children to make good progress towards the early learning goals, the layout and use of the premises and the storage problem means that many activities are overly adult-led. This means that children's independent learning skills and motivation levels are not fully promoted. This is, however, better in summer when children have free access to the outdoor learning environment.

The childminder has an excellent understanding of how language development is key to children's learning and she uses conversational questioning techniques to help the children to think about what they are doing and to offer challenge to them. For example, whilst the children are setting the table for lunch, the childminder casually asks the older children how many more spoons will be needed. Similarly, whilst reading to all the children, she asks older children to retell parts of the story that they know well and they begin to recognise some of the words. Consequently, older children understand about addition and subtraction as they talk about

more and less, and they know about print carrying meaning, using this knowledge exceptionally well, for example, to write their letters to Santa.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are fully respected and valued as individuals. The childminder knows the children very well and she delights in their developing personalities. She recognises their own personal behaviours for communicating their needs. For example, she notices immediately when they are starting to become tired and is completely aware of their personal toileting needs and attends to them immediately. Children demonstrate their acceptance and enjoyment of the diverse nature of the wider environment by playing happily with the resources, discussing the books with great interest and taking part in activities based around various festivals. Links with the village community mean that the children are exceptionally confident about their place in society. For example, they chat happily about their regular visits to school and playgroup or about when the childminder invited their new teacher to visit them at the childminder's house. Children are particularly proud when they have been able to show their parents around their new school on one of their initial visits together. This excellent preparation makes transitions in their lives much easier.

Children's emotional development is supported very effectively by the childminder and they develop strong bonds and trusting relationships with her and their peers. She is fully committed in providing the children with a warm, loving 'home from home'. Her use of praise and encouragement to manage their self-esteem and therefore their behaviour works exceptionally well. She offers clear guidance kindly when undesirable, yet expected, behaviour presents itself. Similarly, sympathetic explanations to older children about younger children's level of understanding, means that they too are kind and considerate when younger children try to join in the game. Consequently, children are relaxed, confident and they play very well together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There is good clear written information for parents on all aspects of the care and education provided and their individual children's development. A significant factor in the children's success lays within the wonderful three-way relationships that children experience with their parents and the childminder. This relationship is initiated in the children's own home first before they attend the childminding setting and continues in the same way throughout their time spent with the childminder. The childminder informs and involves parents fully in all aspects of the children's care and learning. Her efforts have meant that parents can join in with the older children's phonics games in preparation for starting school. Parents write glowing letters of praise and thanks, expressing the high esteem in which they hold for the childminder.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The childminder has an excellent approach to her professional development; she continues to attend a broad range of short training courses to make sure that she keeps her knowledge up

to date to supplement her level 3 and level 4 qualifications. She also works well with the local authority's childminding network co-ordinator to evaluate aspects of practice and to make improvements where possible. This means that children and parents have the benefit of a continually improving service.

Children are relaxed and happy in the comfortable and homely environment. However, the layout of the premises and the way that they are currently used presents challenges for the childminder in her ability to offer the children free choice in their activities. For example, although risks in the kitchen have been minimised, the childminder often keeps the door shut. This means that the creative activities or the jigsaws in the kitchen cannot be accessed by the older children whilst she reads to the younger ones, or vice versa. This slightly limits the younger children's independence and the older children's independent learning. Effective links with the local pre-school group, primary school and childminding network provide the children with additional social experience and play opportunities. For example, the childminder often links with the pre-school for outings and uses the toy library to supplement her equipment.

All aspects of the childminder's documentation are clear and well organised. For example, all records about the children, their care and development are kept up to date and filed effectively. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection it was suggested that the childminder develop her knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and how it relates to early years. The childminder has now undertaken some related training. Her recent training on 'Moving and Handling Children Safely' also covered the safe handling of children with disabilities and the related legislation. This promotes the needs of all children. This is the first inspection of the educational provision.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop ways of using the premises and resources to further encourage children to make independent choices in their play and learning (also applies to nursery education).

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk